

# Developmental Disabilities Services Innovation Think Tank

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## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### ~ WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW ~

**Community Supports** assist people to develop skills and social connections. Supports help a person explore what is important to them to reach their goals. Community Support is both paid, formal services and building natural relationships.

| Examples of Community Supports  |
|---|
| - Learn how to live independently by learning how to budget money, shop for food or learn how to ride a bus |
| - Learn how to make and keep healthy relationships  |
| - Learn how to be a giving and valued member of the community   |
| - Learn a new and interesting skill or hobby  |

#### FY 2017

| Community Supports                     | #     |
|--|-------|
| People who received community supports | 2,180 |

- Community supports can be a variety of many different types of activities. What it looks like is different for every person.
- A person should get the same level of support for which they are funded.
- When requests are made for new community supports funding, they cannot be more than a total of 25 hours (including any work supports).
- 84% of people interviewed said they regularly participated in activities in their communities, such as going shopping, out to eat, to appointments, or for entertainment (National Core Indicators – NCI)
- 84% of people interviewed said they “had the opportunity to meet new people” (NCI)
- 27% of people interviewed said they “volunteer” (NCI)
- 23% of people interviewed said they “went out to a religious service or spiritual practice” in the past month (NCI)

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### ~ *WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES* ~

- Showing how supports make a person's life better.
- Not getting all the hours of community support that a person is funded for.
- Access to transportation.
- Concerns about risk, liability, personal safety and community protection.
- A person with a new need for Community Supports is limited to a total of 25 hours of Community Supports and Work Supports.
- Finding creative ways for a person to spend time in their community and participate in ways that are inclusive and typical.
- People have limited personal funds to pay for activities, fees, materials and events.
- Being aware of a person's history of trauma, cultural differences and past experiences when helping them connect to their community and try new things.
- When a person wants to go to a community event or activity, but it happens in the evening and on weekends.

### ~ *WHAT CAN WORK WELL* ~

- Helping a person develop meaningful relationships.
- Being able to hang out with their peers if a person wants to.
- Showing how supports can change a life by having a person tell their story.
- Focusing on quality (how good something is), not quantity (how much of something there is).
- Providing instruction and guidance that results in learning new skills.
- Using "MAPS" to do person-centered planning to explore what is important to a person.
- Exploring experiences that focus on a person's strengths and passions.
- Creating opportunities that could become something meaningful to a person. Encouraging a person to try something more than once.
- Focusing on the positive and how to make something happen – not the negative.
- Focusing on people being included in regular community activities.
- Finding opportunities for a person to give back to others in their community.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### (What Can Work Well)

- Developing natural supports by meeting friends, neighbors and others who have similar interests as the person.
- Helping a person be seen in a way they will be socially valued and included.
- Engaging in a way that strengthens a person's relationship with their support worker.
- Being creative in figuring out how a person learns and how to engage them.
- Finding ways to support a person in a way so that the person's support worker becomes invisible to others.
- Using technology, such as iPhone, iPad, pagers, to help a person be more independent and safe in their community.
- When supports are guided by values and not by money.
- Intentional learning opportunities ("Global Campus") run by peers that are person-centered and focused on what a person does well and cares about.
- Focusing on the person, not a program.
- Focusing on a person being and participating in their community. Looking at meaningful work, volunteer experiences, spiritual wellness, social relationships, political participation, education and self-development and recreational experiences.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### ~ *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS* ~

It might be helpful to get your ideas for the retreat ready ahead of time.  
These are questions we will be talking about:

1. In your experience, what types of community supports have you found work the best?
2. What type of community supports have you noticed were not helpful? Could have been done differently?
3. What do you think could be done to help a person find things to do that they love?
4. Have you heard of good ways to support people that we can try?
5. What creative supports or ways of doing things that you have learned about that are used in other places?